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SUBJECT: SOMALIA-- TALKING POINTS FOR 03/28 EXPERTS MEETING

1. This is an action message, see paragraph 2.

2. USUN is instructed to draw from the following talking points and seek elements in paragraph 3 for a PRST on Somalia in response to the March 14 Secretary General (SYG) report on Somalia.

Begin points:

-- The United States believes the March 14 SYG report on Somalia and its annexes are a good starting point for the UN to become further engaged in Somalia. While we do not agree with some of the findings, we acknowledge that the UN put substantial thought and effort into formulating this report and their recommendations.

-- The United States agrees with the UN's recommendation in the Strategic Assessment for Somalia that the political, security, and programmatic efforts of the UN and the international community should be coordinated and well organized.

Political Track

-- The United States continues to support efforts by the Special Representative to the Secretary General for Somalia Ahmedou Ould Abdallah and the Somali Prime Minister Nur "Adde" Hassan Hussein to reach out to the opposition. It is extremely important that this dialogue continue with the goal of moving towards national elections in 2009 and improving local-level security conditions. However, we want to stress to the UN that efforts to engage the opposition should not include groups utilizing terrorist tactics and must exclude the terrorist leadership of al-Shabaab.

-- The United States was concerned by certain aspects of the Strategic Assessment that seemed to indicate the UN favors a new formal agreement or re-opening the existing transitional framework, a decision clearly better left to the parties in Somalia. Large-scale peace conferences, such as the National Reconciliation Congress held inside Somalia in July-August 2007, and the Somalia National Reconciliation conference that was held outside Somalia and ended with the formulation of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and adoption of the Transitional Federal Charter in 2004, provide the way forward. The first goal of dialogue with opposition groups should be to advance these objectives and achieve the mandate of the transitional process outlined by the Charter.

-- The United States supports the relocation of the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS), as well as other essential members of the UN Country Team (UNCT) from Kenya to Somalia as soon as possible. We agree with the recommendations in Scenario One of the UN contingency planning that while the security situation does not

currently allow for the relocation of UNPOS personnel, the Department of Safety and Security (DSS) should start the planning for the relocation of UNPOS to Somalia. The United States would like to request DSS to develop viable options for submission to the Council on the relocation of UNPOS to Somalia that include an estimated cost for each option. Related, while we believe UNPOS can be most effective in Mogadishu, we would also support a phased relocation to the capital, if it is more feasible for UNPOS to first return to another part of Somalia.

-- Once UNPOS has returned to Somalia, the United States would like to see the expansion of its mandate. This expansion should focus on helping the TFG prepare for the 2009 election, in addition to its current role in facilitating political dialogue.

Security Track

-- In general the United States was disappointed with the contingency planning for a possible UN PKO. While we understand the difficulties developing contingency planning for a PKO when security realities on the ground are so unstable and unpredictable, it is unacceptable for the UN to wait for the "ideal" security conditions to plan for a UN PKO or until all or even a vast majority of the parties have agreed to a political power-sharing agreement. The people of Somalia can not wait so long for the UN to take a leadership role in the security of Somalia.

-- That being said, we feel the UN Security Council should clarify what we want a UN PKO to do in Somalia so DPKO can develop an appropriate strategy. We believe a potential UN PKO should focus on: protecting the TFG and its institutions in South Central Somalia; protecting and providing logistical support for UN activities in Somalia; contributing to the restoration of necessary security conditions for the safe provision of humanitarian assistance and facilitating full humanitarian access in South and Central Somalia; contributing to the protection of civilian populations under imminent threat of physical violence within its capabilities and area of deployment; and assisting in the promotion of rule of law in Somalia to include the judiciary system. The mandate could be adjusted as the security and political situations evolve.

-- The United States commends AMISOM for its courageous efforts in Somalia. The international community needs to do everything in its power to make sure AMISOM has the resources it needs. While the United States cannot support the funding of non-UN operations through UN assessed contributions, we realize AMISOM needs more support, and we would be willing to support a donors' conference for AMISOM. We would also support the forming of a "Friends of AMISOM Group" that could help raise additional resources for this mission.

-- The United States agrees with the idea of developing a maritime task force (MTF) for Somalia, and subject to resources, command and control arrangements, and appropriate rules of engagement, escorting of supply ships to AMISOM and humanitarian actors in Somalia could be an important aspect of the mission set for such MTF. An equally important aspects should include preventing acts of violence against international shipping in Somali waters and counter-piracy operations. Over the last couple of years there has been a sharp increase in acts of violence against international shipping and piracy in and off Somali waters. This is a direct threat to international peace and security, as well as global commerce, and the UN should act to stem this threat immediately. On February 27, the TFG sent a letter to the SC requesting assistance in combating piracy off its coast. We look forward to working with the Council on this important issue.

Programmatic track

-- The United States is supportive of the idea of improving coordination and policy planning between political, security and programmatic elements of the UN's mission in Somalia. The UN should try to advance the objectives in each track equally to streamline efforts and effectiveness. While we agree with the need to more closely coordinate programmatic efforts with UN political and security efforts, we must be careful to maintain the neutrality of humanitarian operations. Linking some programmatic efforts, specifically humanitarian efforts, too closely with political and security missions may hinder the effectiveness of such operations, especially in the area of how the UN offices interact with their NGO colleagues on the ground. As a result, we should think carefully about any efforts to institutionalize links of humanitarian offices with political or security ones.

End points.

Outcome Document

13. At this time the United States feels a PRST is the most appropriate UNSC document to respond to the March 14 SYG report and its annexes. USUN is instructed to work the British and other Council partners to try to incorporate the following elements into the PRST.

-- thanking the SYG for his thorough report;
-- recognizing SRSR Ahmedou Ould Abdullah and PM Nur "Adde" Hassan Hussein for their continued efforts to reach out to the legitimate opposition in Somalia;
-- condemning Al-Shabaab as a terrorist organization and its recent statement refusing to engage in any political dialogue process and reiterating its determination to continue targeting peacekeepers in Somalia;
-- stating the importance of having UNPOS return to Somalia as soon as conditions permit and requesting DSS to develop options on the relocation of UNPOS to Somalia including a cost assessment of each option;
-- stressing the need for the international community to provide greater financial and logistical support for AMISOM immediately to facilitate deployment of troop contributing countries requiring additional funding guarantees and to help ensure the success of this critical mission;
-- (if others in the Council agree) calling on the international community to develop a "Friends of AMISOM" group to help with fundraising and logistical support to AMISOM, including the calling of a donor conference for AMISOM;
-- welcoming the idea of a "maritime task force" to prevent acts of violence against shipping and piracy and subject to resources, command and control, and rules of engagement to escort supply ships to humanitarian actors and AMISOM in and around Somalia territorial waters. Stressing the desire for a UNSCR authorizing members to enter Somali territorial waters to carry out these actions and calling on members to assist in detaining and prosecuting suspected pirates or others suspected of committing acts of violence against international shipping;
-- acknowledging the effort by the UN in developing contingency plans for a possible UN PKO, but requesting that DPKO conduct further contingency planning that would call for deployment of a UN PKO under less than ideal circumstances with a mandate of protecting the TFG and its institutions in South Central Somalia, protecting and providing logistical support for UN activities in Somalia, contributing to the restoration of necessary security conditions for the safe provision of humanitarian assistance and facilitating full humanitarian access in South and Central Somalia, contributing to the protection of civilian populations under imminent threat of physical violence within its capabilities and area of deployment, and assisting in the promotion of rule of law in Somalia to include the judiciary

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